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Jewels of Elul
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For all politicians, an election is a referendum on their responsiveness to constituents, their awareness of the needs of the community, and their pledge to do a good job in the future. For many Jews, the month of Elul sometimes feels like a similar campaign season to get voted in for another year in the "Book of Life."

The undertaking is intensive. We are instructed to ask forgiveness, prepare for fasting, admit our failings, and promise to be more righteous. By being pressed to accept our humility we are given an opportunity to rediscover our humanity.

The essence of being humble is the ability to see ourselves as equals with those around us. As Rabbi Hillel taught, "Do not judge another until you are in the same position." (Ethics of Our Fathers, 2:5)

Humble people can celebrate their successes without being intoxicated by power. They seek to influence events, even though they cannot control their outcome. They work to uplift others in need, not exploit their vulnerabilities. They view checks and balances on their actions as a help, not a hindrance.

Humility is a demanding virtue to strive for, but unlike in elections the good news is that at the High Holidays everyone can emerge as a winner.